

Refugee Advisory Board Meeting
July 31, 2008
Department of Community & Culture
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Refugee Advisory Board Members: Palmer DePaulis, Gerald Brown, Zaw Than Htike, Patrick Poulin, Michael Gallegos, Lina Smith, Saran Nahas, Marty Kelly (for Brenda Hales), Dr. David Sundwall, and Manual Romero (for Lisa-Michele Church)

Other Attendees: Mona Guet, Diane Bates, Claudia Nakano, David Borgia, Ghulam Hasnain, Annette Babisz and Mary Gehman-Smith

Welcome and Opening Business

Palmer welcomed the group and introductions were made. Palmer stated he hopes this new meeting time will work for everyone. Prior to the next meeting, reminder phone calls will be made.

Palmer introduced David Borgia. David is working on the Utah Refugee Conflict Resolution Project at the Attorney General's office for the summer. This is data collection with Utah Valley University Behavioral Science Department interviewing refugee communities on approaches they are using to resolve conflicts. In conjunction with the law school, they are putting together mini courses on dispute resolution. He is trying to develop a model in refugee communities where they can go to resolve their conflicts, then back to the mediator, then back to the Court. Mike asked David if he plans to interview the providers. David would do this. He will be writing up a summary at the end of the summer. The questionnaire he distributed is for information only.

Mary will send David the Barriers and Gaps document.

Approval of the Meeting Minutes

Palmer called for the approval of the June 30, 2008 meeting minutes. The group received the minutes without objection.

Charter Finalization

Palmer called for a motion to accept the Charter. This document is dynamic. As we go through and experience how we will deal with our delivery system,

the document may change. Therefore, we can review it again. This gives us guidance per the Executive Order. Mike stated there has been sufficient discussion on this and motioned to accept the document as written. The motion carried. Any future issues can be discussed as needed.

Refugee Services Office

Gerald reported since the last meeting, we have seen the same problems arise. The main problem is refugees can't read their mail such as appointments, letters from DWS, and their landlord. They miss their appointments and they get into trouble. The interpreters hired by DWS are doing a fantastic job. They provide Gerald with detailed summaries. The second biggest issue is housing. No real progress has been made.

Gerald reported a bidder's conference was held on July 10, 2008. Just a few people attended. The deadline was postponed and two more bidder's conferences were scheduled. A summary was written and resent. Ghulam Hasnain stated the mandatory requirement that the bidder have managed \$100,000 in the past is a concern. He feels this would have been better split 50/50. One has to feel comfortable with their partner. This can create a challenge. Mike Gallegos added last year, this was an issue in building capacity for the smaller organizations. We don't want to put barriers in front of the smaller organizations. Mike continued maybe there needs to be a training opportunity for the smaller organizations. He also wants the smaller organizations to be able to be mentored by larger organizations. Zaw added in the Burmese community, they can't speak English or communicate very well. These are obstacles in pairing up with a larger mentor. If there is not enough interest at the next bidder's conference, we may lower the amount and review other options.

Burundi Community Issues

Palmer stated the committee needs to get into the issues of our delivery system. We need to provide guidance to the operational side. Case management has been a top issue.

Saran Nahas stated the Burundi face tremendous problems. The kids are isolated in schools and they feel their peers don't want to mix with them. The language barrier has isolated them from other kids. The dropout and crime rates are increasing. She feels as parents, this is our responsibility.

Second, parents can't read their mail so they frequently miss parent/teacher conferences. If they can read their mail, they can attend the conferences. Another problem is the language in school; there is a lack of interpreters. The resettlement agencies need to address bus issues. Another problem is women are not comfortable with male interpreters in hospitals. Most Burundi don't speak English and they don't understand their contracts such as landlord agreements. So, they just sign. They don't have the funds to pay the fines. Palmer added these issues are the same in several of the communities. Lina Smith reported at Whittier Elementary, they are setting up a table for parent/back to school, with all languages being represented. This is a pilot AAU is taking on. Saran suggested creating a workshop to teach parents how to get the kids ready for school. Gerald added maybe a Saturday workshop could be set up to educate the Burundi community. The United Africans could help set this up.

Patrick Poulin added IRC acknowledges language and transportation issues. Financial stability is difficult for Burundi's. The waiting list for housing is about three years. There seems to be bullying for the Burundi children in schools. He continued families have different needs. One on one case management is needed. The resettlement agencies aren't set up to provide this level of support.

Ghulam Hasnain stated the model of case management doesn't always work. Social agencies are available but the refugee can't always get to these agencies. Mike added we are looking at intensive case management, lots of support, contact and intervention. Lina stated AAU is doing home visits.

Manual Romero added the model needs to be a two-prong approach. There needs to be an education piece for the case managers so they can better understand the community and resources available.

Zaw Than Htike stated when refugees miss appointments; they may be cut off their services such as cash assistance, food stamps or medical. There is a gap between the resettlement agencies and DWS.

Patrick stated the resettlement agencies sponsor refugees for six months then they are transferred to AAU, who follow them for five years. Palmer added it has been proposed more case management be provided up front.

The two-year plan makes more sense in helping refugees get through the process. IRC teaches refugees how to ride the bus and provides most of the interpreters for health appointments.

Palmer continued a proposal has been made to accept a service delivery model, which would lengthen the case management to two years. This will take funding to provide the right training and case managers. He and Gerald have talked about this and a funding number needs to be identified.

Gerald presented the service delivery model. From his experience, if we could provide case management from date of arrival to the two-year mark, we can turn this around. We also plan to add a volunteer program and build refugee community capacity. Gerald wants to hire case managers of the same ethnicity, supervised by case managers, well trained, 25 cases per worker, elements including assessment, hooking them up to services and making sure they get to the person they need. One of the duties of this Advisory Board is to make services are more accessible, that is why we have stakeholders on this Board.

Gerald believes the cost will be about \$650,000. He has already found \$150,000 from the way we are paying for services at DWS-Metro. We are looking at \$100,000 of TANF funds and \$150,000 from Targeted Assistance (Federal money that goes to employment). We need to come up with \$250,000; this is one of the responsibilities of this Board.

Patrick suggested other possible funding: Medicaid (sometimes they can fund certain types of case management), Department of Health (there are monies available for people addressing issues such as mental health, HIV, TB), DCFS (funding for family preservation, a designated case worker), the State Office of Education (a caseworker focusing on specific issues). Ghulam suggested United Way, who is working on a refugee initiative. A private/corporate fund was also suggested. Mike Gallegos added some of these agencies could use this money to tweak their own services, specializing to the refugee community.

Palmer reported he spoke with Jane Shock. American Express is currently financing \$20,000 to the Portal Program with IRC. AM EX requires a business plan to look at something like this. Patrick stated money can be

counted from all sources and can be added up to count towards our goals. Mike added these funds need to be added to the funds, which are already being funded. The State has already contributed \$200,000 ongoing.

Palmer asked if this service delivery model is an approach that this Board approves of. Mike added he agrees with Gerald's proposal, but he is concerned if funds are taken from employment and case management for social services, where will refugees go for assistance with employment?

Mike Gallegos explained TAG is a three-year plan. He is proposing to maintain the same level of employment services, but take some of the three-year plan and push the allocation forward. This is programmed July 1 - June 30. They plan to tap into this funding to support this effort and maintain the same level of employment.

Patrick stated this will be good for the communities as case workers will be hired from within the communities.

Patrick explained IRC receives \$425.00 per individual from Federal money for 30 days. \$425.00 goes to the refugee and \$425.00 to the agency. Example: family of 10, \$850.00 per person, $\frac{1}{2}$ of that goes to the refugee, $\frac{1}{2}$ goes to administrative costs to the resettlement agency.

Gerald believes if we get the system fixed, we can resettle twice as many people.

The \$250,000 gap needed should be reduced as we get the volunteer program and the capacity building going.

Gerald reiterated we need a financial subcommittee.

Palmer called for approval of the service delivery model change. This would improve the quality of the people we are resettling and close the barriers and gaps. Patrick motioned to accept this direction. The motion carried.

Gerald expressed concern about today's attendance. Palmer stated we need to move forward, identify funding opportunities. We will reach out to stakeholders.

Subcommittee Discussion

Palmer discussed incorporating the County Housing co-chaired by Michael Gallegos and Jane Shock. Mike will take care of this. He will schedule a meeting, and the committee will summarize what has been going on for the last several months.

Palmer and Mike will meet and work on a summary of what has been going on with the County Housing Committee.

DWS currently sponsors a Provider's meeting monthly. Palmer suggested folding this into a subcommittee however, Lina sees the Provider's meeting as an information sharing.

Mike stated this Board was assembled to bridge the barriers and gaps. This is an agenda item for the next meeting.

By the next meeting, Palmer will have a fund raising Chair. This chair will flesh out a committee. We will also have a grant writer. Jane Shock has suggested that grants could be provided for a grant writer under a contractual basis.

Patrick offered to co-chair the Case Management Committee with Lina Smith and Aden Batar.

Gerald wants a volunteer capacity building committee to work with Laura Durrant.

Gerald will take on lead on assembling a Steering Committee.

Mike will provide the county volunteer manager.

Manuel Romero stated there is a need to educate the community. DHS is working on a web site, which will address committees. This is a web site for case managers and providers. DHS wants a list of people who can present at conferences. He wants to ensure this web site contains community resources. He needs accurate information about the refugee experience.

Zaw wants to be part of the capacity building.

Yesterday, when the office of Ethnic Affairs met with the Governor, Amadou Niang brought up refugee housing. The Governor asked Amadou to provide more specific information on Housing through the United Africans of Utah.

Palmer will meet with Mike Gallegos, as these issues need to be summarized and back to the Governor within 30 days.